

A
Bit of
Old
Lace



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CHICAGO

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no 1

SCENARIO:

A BIT OF OLD LACE

*Scenes Laid In and About
Edinburgh, Scotland*

BY
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CHICAGO
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LOCATION

The Scottish Central Lowlands on the East embrace the shires of Sterling, Clackmannan, Kinross and Fife. The famous Bridge over the Forth leads to Mareross Station in Kinross. The moorlands there have small scatterings of old houses built centuries ago, and these houses appear as though nothing new had been added to them in over two hundred years. Small lakes are interspersed on the moors. Loch Leven in Kinross contains an island with the remains of the historic Castle, where Mary Stuart, Queen of Scots, was confined (1567-8).

In Kinross, this story begins, and continues at Edinburgh, and concludes at Portobello, a fishing resort, on the Firth of Forth.



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A BIT OF OLD LACE

Mr. John Campbell relates the following story, told to him by Mr. George Burnie in Hazeldeen Manor, Edinburgh. (They are sitting beside a Cabinet of Choice Collections; George Burnie holds in his hand an old lace handkerchief that has been carefully mended.)

SCENE I.

HAZELDEEN MANOR, EDINBURGH

"THIS small piece of lace," said George, "is the most precious in our Cabinet. To explain I will go back several years to a Summer when I was travelling about for my health and motoring over the Moorlands of Scotland in and around Kinross. My destination was Edinburgh.

"When I came near to Marcross, clouds threatening rain caused me to look for shelter. A number of little old houses came into view. I stopped my car at one of these. A dim light shone through a cut dial over the door. I walked to the threshold and pulled an old-style knocker. A middle-aged woman opened the door. I inquired, 'May I find accommodations from the storm?' Hesitatingly she invited me in, saying, 'I will speak with my Sister.' I followed her into the living-room. I looked around the quaint room and viewed its antique furnishings—an ancient spinet piano, low book-shelves filled with books, a small fireplace with a tea-kettle placed upon a griddle attached to the grating. Presently my hostess returned and said, 'You may place your car in the shed, and we will make you as comfortable as possible.' She then lighted the

fagots of sticks and presently the flames sent a blaze of warmth throughout the room. My evening meal was of cold mutton, oat-cakes, cheese and tea that I brewed myself from the cannister on the table and boiling water from the kettle on the hearth. My hostess said that her name was Miss Selwyn, and that my room would be in readiness on the floor above when ready to retire.

“I sat there before the crackling embers in a reminiscent mood and soon dozed off in slumber. Suddenly I was aroused by hearing a light footstep enter the room. I turned and saw a woman coming toward me, and could hardly believe that I was not dreaming. Her appearance was most startling, her dress, although worn, hung gracefully around her beautiful figure, her luxuriant hair fell down her shoulders, and her eyes were large and sorrowful, indeed she looked the picture of distress. She sat down in a chair nearby and said, ‘Sir, pardon me for intruding, but when I heard your voice I grew bold enough to come down stairs and ask your assistance. Are you going to Edinboro?’ ‘I am,’ I replied. She then in a hurried rambling manner told me how her little girl had been forcibly torn from her arms—by her—’ there she ceased speaking for Miss Selwyn came in and gently led her out of the room. I was too tired to think much about the incident at all and presently retired to my room and slept soundly throughout the night.

“Early the next morning I arose and dressed for breakfast. Coffee and rolls were served me. I then made inquiry about my visitor on the night before. ‘Oh,’ said Miss Selwyn, ‘I am so sorry about it, she slipped away down stairs before we knew it. She comes of a fine family, and is our ‘paid guest.’ She

is a poor unfortunate woman who is not responsible for the things she does or what she says. She has been here many years, and her cousin sends us a cheque every month for her keeping. Now, she is very little trouble to us, but is forever asking for her child, and when not combing her hair, she fondles an old piece of lace, this she keeps in her pocket wrapped up in an old chamois skin. We do not notice these actions any more, they keep her busy and quiet for a little while.'

"I went out of doors and around the house to get my car, when who should step out from behind a door but my night visitor. 'Please try and find my little girl,' she said. I assured her, 'I will try.' I turned to get my bag, which I lifted and threw upon the front seat. Then I noticed that she had gone. With a sigh for the unfortunate one, I jumped into the front seat of the car and drove away. Along in the afternoon I stopped to see, if by chance, I might find a place to rest and take refreshment of some kind. Glancing back in the car in the bottom were my blankets all in a heap and under them I saw something move. Hastily I pulled the blankets aside and there found the poor woman all curled up. My first thought was to return with her to Miss Selwyn's. She begged me to take her to Edinburgh and something moved me to do so. I then assisted her upon the rear seat of the car and tried to make her comfortable and threw the blankets well over and nearly covering her person. My thoughts during the rest of the journey would be impossible to describe. I went direct to the home of my old college friend, Dr. Charles Stewart, for I had intended to visit with him and his family while in Edinburgh.

"Late that night I drove up the roadway leading to his dwelling. His houseman, who came around to

meet me, asked whom I wished to see? I handed him my card. I did not have to wait long, for my chum came hurriedly and appeared bareheaded and in house-jacket. I took him one side and explained all that had happened. He then helped me to assist the woman up through a side door leading to his office. We seated her in an easy chair. She refused the food offered to her, but drank a strong cup of tea, and was soon placed upon and resting upon a couch.

“The Doctor and I conversed way into the night. I inquired about his family. Among other things he said that his son Roger had grown into manhood. ‘My boy is causing his mother and I great worry, not that he is a bad son, the fault is that he refuses to pursue his studies and take up a profession that I have set my heart upon for him. Now, John,’ said he, ‘you may think I am unreasonable when I tell you what we object to in the things that he is doing. He seems to care for nothing else except to sail a boat around the Firth, very often the fishermen’s boats, going to and staying around a settlement at Portobello, and there he mixes with these men and even makes merry with ordinary fish-women.’ We were then interrupted in our talk by the entrance of Helen, the wife of the Doctor, who came forward and greeted me with a hearty ‘Welcome,’ and asked, ‘What are you doing at this early hour of the morning?’ The facts were soon told. Helen then opened the door to the Doctor’s office and found that she had awakened our charge. Arrangements were made for her care and comfort. The women were much in the company of each other day after day, and in about a fortnight Madame took a change for the better in mind and body. She grew to feel at home in the Stewart family.”

A BIT OF OLD LACE

Madeline Chambers Tells Her Story

SCENE II.

THE STEWART HOME, EDINBURGH

“One evening after dinner, we had entered the living-room. Helen had assisted our guest to a couch. The Doctor and I then sat down in easy chairs. Helen asked us to draw a little nearer, and we drew our chairs toward the ladies. Our visitor asked permission to tell us her story. The Doctor said ‘Please do so.’

“‘My name is Madeline Chambers,’ she began. ‘When my Father died, he left me alone with my little girl, then a child not over three years of age. A feeling of loneliness had come over me. I then sent for my only known relative living—a cousin, Percy Allan. I had not seen him since we were children. He lived in London and arrived at the Manor in time to attend the funeral services. Percy had never been a favorite in our Family. He had squandered a fortune given to him by his father. He had since then lived by his wits and his debts. We had at times heard ‘stories’ about him, and at heart had misgivings about Percy. Almost at first sight of him, I saw my mistake, for his presence seemed repellent to me. I had expected that he would return to London after a few

days at Hazeldeen Manor,' (at mention of the Manor, Dr. Stewart said, 'I have a patient there'). Madeline continued, 'instead of going away, he had his mail forwarded to our place. When his letters came they seemed to irritate and annoy him. He would then storm around and curse his luck. The wines and liquors from our cellar would soon cheer him up. He would then become talkative. He grew familiar with the butler. The butler liked the opportunity of serving extra wines, especially to himself.

" 'Late one afternoon, I had refused to listen to the proposals of love and marriage by Percy to me, and finally growing restless and nervous at his persistence, abruptly I left him. I quickly found little Jean and taking her hand in mine we went out into the garden. We ran back and forth upon the lawn, and played the game,

'DROP THE HANDKERCHIEF.'

Jean enjoyed throwing it at my feet, and I would run to catch her. We were quite tired out, and I ran to and took a nearby seat. Jean swiftly followed me. I lifted her upon my lap. I took from her hand and held the handkerchief up to show her the pattern. Look, Jean, at this wreath woven around a tiny linen center. The Carrick-Marcross Company has made the wreath with a vine of Scottish thistle, an English rose, a lily of France and an Irish shamrock. I told her that the man had become famous who had drawn this wreath for the Lace Works. Little Jean could not understand it well. She took the handkerchief and seemed to love the dainty thing.'

" 'Twilight had now set in, and we arose and entered the house. It was quite dark. In the library, we

A
Bit of
Old Lace



found Percy and the old butler in an awful state of drunkenness. On seeing me, Percy came rushing toward us, and in gruff tones said, 'I will make you consent to marry me!' In anger I replied, 'No! I never will!' He then seized and dragged little Jean from my arms calling, 'You will not see her again, unless you do as I say!' He then with her in his arms ran down a rear stairway that led to the servants' quarters. I followed after him screaming all the way. Going hurriedly down the stairs I stumbled and fell head first to the floor below. The fall must have made me unconscious. I never knew what happened after that. My mind was a blank until I awoke in Miss Selwyn's house. I was there when I found you. I asked her, 'What has happened, and what place am I in?' 'You are with friends, and have been ill a very long time,' that is all she would tell me. When I was able to walk about, she would take me out into the garden, and let me wander around. No one ever came there whom I could meet. An elderly woman, Miss Selwyn called her 'Sister,' sometimes would come and sit with me. She would never answer my questions. Once I tried to climb over a stone wall that enclosed the garden. I lost my hold and fell to the ground. I was told never to try anything like that again, that to do so would not help me. Miss Selwyn was distant with me, she was a soulless sort, silent and determined. I was weakened by my long illness, and discouraged with my poor effort to secure help or information from these women. I gave way to my fate and hoped something might happen to relieve my situation. I never was allowed any light at night. I sat at the window and watched the moon and stars. There I could see dimly my little treasure,

A TORN LACE HANDKERCHIEF,

that I have told you about. 'They did not take that away from me. It was a comfort to unfold and gaze upon this plaything. It was the last one that little Jean and I had thrown the night that we were separated.'

"Madeline ceased talking, she raised her hand to her brow. Helen's eyes were filled with tears. Dr. Stewart muttering his anger walked up and down the room. I reached over to Madeline, and taking both her hands in mine, held them tremblingly. 'You are all so kind to me,' she said, and looking up into my eyes, she added, 'I shall never be able to show you how grateful I am. You have helped save me from that fate, an atmosphere worse than death.' 'Yes you can,' I whispered, 'You can let me care for you the rest of your life.' Helen and the Doctor left the room. I then told Madeline how much I loved her, and in response to my ardor, she confessed how she had trusted and loved me from the beginning that evening we had first met at Miss Selwyn's.

A BIT OF OLD LACE

SCENE III.

HAZELDEEN MANOR, EDINBURGH

“Dr. Stewart arranged that we should accompany him to Hazeldeen Manor. Madeline was strong enough now to undergo the meeting with her Cousin. We arrived there late one afternoon. The Doctor went in alone to see Mr. Percy Allan. Helen, Madeline and I remained outside in the car. Madeline seemed very much affected when she saw the old familiar grounds where she had last played with her child. In a few minutes, the Doctor returned and suggested going into the house. An old stooped-shouldered servant led us through the hallway into the reception-room. There Percy Allan came tottering toward us. He looked wretched. ‘Madeline,’ he said, ‘Forgive me, I had thought that you were beyond recovery when I left you with Miss Selwyn.’ ‘Tell me,’ said Madeline, ‘where I can find my little Jean. ‘This is all, I ask you.’ He declared that he knew nothing at all of the child’s whereabouts. ‘For,’ continued Percy, ‘the night the butler placed her in one of the servants’ rooms alone, she disappeared. I had called to him to come and help me. You had fainted. We brought you to. You opened your eyes and looked wildly at us. You could not speak a word. We in our fright had sobered up. Then the butler went in search of Jean. He failed to find a trace of her. The physician advised that you be taken to and placed under the care of a private

family that he knew of. This family kept 'paid guests.' Unfortunate persons were so called.'

"Madeline was overcome by this interview. She grieved not to receive better news of her lost child. She requested that we tell Percy Allan to depart without delay, and a like order was given for the butler. They both packed their things and went away to London that night.

"Helen remained at the Manor with Madeline. A maid was sent for from the Stewart home. She brought with her clothing and necessary articles for Helen and Madeline. I returned to the Doctor's home with him. There, the Doctor found his son, Roger, awaiting him. A quarrel arose between the Doctor and Roger. Roger defied his Father and left the house. I then made up my mind to find out what Roger was doing out at Portobello."

A BIT OF OLD LACE

SCENE IV.

ON THE BEACH AT PORTOBELLO, SCOTLAND

"The next day I set out to go to the fishermen's resort. I arrived at Portobello in a few hours. On the beach I saw the waves dashing high and roll in upon the shore. Men were hauling in fish in nets. Men were placing nets to dry. Men were mending nets. Women were carrying baskets of fish strapped upon their backs. Their hair was black and fell in heavy braids. They had on bright-colored home-spun, short flannel skirts, and short-sleeved blouses thrown open at the throat. They wore woolen stockings and heavy rough shoes. The scene was picturesque. My attention was directed to a crude platform. There preparations were under way for activities in the evening. An old man was playing a Scottish reel upon a bag-pipe. Several couples began to dance in a grotesque manner: swinging each other wildly around. All gave life and color to this busy port.

"A boat had been drawn in upon the sands. I saw Roger Stewart there talking to a young girl. She was so unlike the other women. Her hair was like spun-gold and hung in curls around a lovely, smiling face. 'No wonder,' I thought, 'Roger comes to Portobello, if he is as happy as he looks in company with that lovely girl.' She left him, ran to a 'shack' and pres-

ently returned with a scarf. This she placed around her shoulders. They strolled toward the dancers.

“Something caused me to go to the shack, the one Roger’s companion came out of. In the room through the doorway I saw an old fish-woman. She was winding cord that nets are made of. I paused there for a moment or two, and then went forward and entered the room.

A BIT OF OLD LACE

Hannah Hein's Story

SCENE V.

THE HEIN SHACK, PORTOBELLO

"The old fish-woman asked me, 'What do you want?' I then explained that I would like to know something about that beautiful girl who had just left her, and the young lad who was with her. She eyed me intently and then seemed satisfied at my presence.

" 'Roger,' she began, 'comes from Edinboro, nearly every day. He helps the men in their work. He seems to like my Lassie's company.' I ventured, 'Is she your daughter?' There was no answer. Then I heard her say, 'No, but I have brought her up. She has lived here with me since I found her.' 'Tell me,' I then said, 'your name and how she came to live with you.'

" 'I am 'Hannah,' Hannah Hein. I have a brother William. He is a shepherd. He lives on a stock-farm away over the hills. I had visited him—this coming Autumn—twelve years ago. I was on my way home on foot about dusk. I had come down a steep hill. In the midst of a sheet of fog, I saw something on the ground. I thought the object was a stray 'lambie.' On lifting, I found it was a little Lassie. I brought her home, to this very place. 'She is a little girl that had been left to my keeping,' that's all I would say to my neighbors. I have brought her up the best I could.

I have saved her from hard work. She has helped me dry and mend nets for the fishermen.' I asked, 'Do you know any of her relatives or her friends?' 'No,' said Hannah. 'Was anything on her person when you found her? Was there any mark to tell who she was?' 'Only a little dress that she wore,' was her reply to my questions. Hannah left the room. She came back with a bundle. It was wrapped in old paper. 'Here it is,' she said. 'And, oh, yes, here is a piece of torn lace. The child had clutched this in her hand. She held it when I picked her up.' My heart beat rapidly. I became greatly excited. I looked at the little piece of lace. I saw at once the flowers woven on it. The pattern was the same. The piece matched the one Madeline had told us about. I then told Hannah that the articles were most important. 'May I take the dress and lace to Edinburgh? I promise to return them as soon as possible,' was all I could say. I finally won her consent.

"I returned to Edinburgh. I lost no time in going to Hazeldeen Manor. I found Madeline. I showed her the lost piece of lace and the old dress. Her face became white. She seemed to faint. She knew the truth. Her loved one had been found. Madeline laughed, she cried, she laughed and cried hysterically.

"Within a few hours we were on our way to the shore. Dr. and Helen Stewart were in the car. Madeline thought the trip would never end. The seconds seemed minutes, the minutes seemed hours. We drew up at last to the Hein Shack. There standing near the doorway stood Roger and Lassie. Dr. Stewart left the car. He walked toward the house. He called out, 'Roger, my lad, everything is all right, come here.' The boy said something to the girl. He then took her



hand in his. Roger then came with her in haste to his Father. We then had joined them. The Doctor then told his son in our presence of the things that had happened that day. Madeline threw her arms joyously around Lassie and embraced her again and again. Her Mother called her 'Jean' and other old endearing names. Madeline asked Jean to call her 'Mother.'

"A happy group of persons that evening motored back to Hazeldeen Manor.

"Old Hannah Hein was given a home at the Manor.

"My story nears the end. Roger willingly continued in the studies his Father desired. Jean received instruction at home.

"Two years ago, Madeline became my wife. Jean and Roger will be married this coming Christmas.

"Tonight, John Campbell, you will meet here at dinner Dr. and Helen Stewart, Jean and Roger, and Madeline, my good wife."

A BIT OF OLD LACE

Mr. John Campbell and Mr. George Burnie are sitting beside a Cabinet of Choice Collections. (Mr. Burnie holds in his hand an old lace handkerchief.)

SCENE VI.

HAZELDEEN MANOR, EDINBURGH

(The same as Scene I.)

“ ‘Now, John, you see that this little treasure has brought every happiness to our dear Home, and you will understand why above all things in our Cabinet, the most precious is this keepsake,

A BIT OF OLD LACE.’ ”

THE END



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The background of the book cover is a repeating diamond-shaped lattice pattern. Overlaid on this pattern are several detailed line drawings of botanical elements. In the upper right, there is a large, open rose with many petals. To its left is a thistle with a prominent, textured head. Below the thistle, there are several smaller, stylized floral motifs and leaves. A large, circular frame is positioned in the center-left, containing the title text. The entire design is rendered in a reddish-brown or terracotta color on a light-colored, textured paper.

A
Bit of
Old Lace